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ABSTRACT

The study of education in general is discussed by the first David Jacks Professor of Higher Education, followed by a review of the concept of the study of higher education. The author's own introductory course on American Higher Education at Stanford University is described, which includes criticisms of higher education, the history of higher learning, analysis of urgent problems, and the place of the American higher educational enterprise in society. Strengths of the system are analyzed, and implications of both strengths and weaknesses are examined. (LBH)

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The Higher Learning Versus the Higher Education

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Professor Hanna has sketched the concepts which he espouses as the first Lee L. Jacks Professor of Child Education, but I have a somewhat different task. Few people seem to know what a professorship of higher education is, and I shall therefore attempt to do two things: first, to discuss the study of education in general and, second, to review my conception of the study of higher education. The significance of the title I have chosen will come into focus toward the end of the latter discussion.

Probably some of you have heard the story of the boy who asked his mother, "Mother, what is a penguin?" "Oh, it's some sort of a bird that lives in the snow," she replied; "but ask your father." "No thank you," retorted the boy, "I don't want to know that much!" Throughout my remarks I shall try to keep the penguin boy in mind.

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Forgetting the adjective higher for a bit, consider the name education as the label given schools, departments, and professors concerned with studying and sustaining the functions performed by what we call educational institutions. As some of you know, the subject originally went by its present name, but the designation did not take hold. In 1826 the Faculty of Amherst College proposed that a professor of education be appointed as one of their number, but Amherst did not then and has not since established such a professorship despite the plea made for it 128 years ago. That plea has such eloquence that I read part of it:

> ... there is one department of great practical importance, which it appears to us, should be annexed to the College, as soon as the funds will any how permit -- we mean the Science of Education. When it is considered how this lies at the very foundation of all improvement;

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> and when so many professorships have been established in all the other sciences, as well as in literature and the arts, it is truly wonderful to us, that so little attention has been bestowed upon the science of mental culture, and that there is not, (as we believe there is not) and never has been, a single Professor of Education, on this side of the Atlantic.[1]

Twenty-three years later the most forsighted college president of the period, Francis Wayland of Brown, proposed that a department of education be established there; but unhappily he called it the Department of Didactics with the result that his efforts to raise money for it brought snickers instead of dollars. The name pedagogics brought similar responses, and so educationists substituted such locutions as "The Theory and Art of Teaching," "School Economy and the Teaching Art," "The Science and Art of Teaching."[15.1] When Paul H. Hanus initiated the subject at Harvard in 1891, undoubtedly his title of "Assistant Professor of the History and Art of Teaching" had a good deal to do with the cool reception given him.

Among the many criticisms which he encountered, the bitterest came from the ordinarily genial George Herbert Palmer, the colleague of James, Munsterberg, Royce, and Santayana, in that most famous of all American departments of philosophy. Soon after Hanus' arrival in Cambridge, he met Palmer who acknowledged him thus: "Ah, Mr. Hanus, I am so pleased to meet you. You have come from the West to teach us how to teach. Isn't that nice?"[8] With that he stalked off and never again acknowledged Hanus' existence during the 22 years that they continued as colleagues on the Harvard Faculty.

Experiences such as these have led to the general adoption of the name proposed by the Amherst Faculty in 1827, but the odium continues. The reasons are numerous, but one of them appears to be that professors of other subjects believe that, since they too are concerned with education, educationists have preempted an appellation to which they have no proper title. Certainly our name does not adequately describe what we in departments of

education do. We shall probably not be renamed, but when occasionally I recall the experience that the wife of a visiting professor of geography here at Stanford had several years ago, I wish we could be.

Soon after the professor took up his duties, his wife attended a meeting of the Women's Faculty Club. "What does your husband do?" asked one of the older members of the club. "He teaches Geography," replied the visiting professor's wife. "Geography," declared the questioner, "I've always thought that the teaching of geography ended in the elementary school." A month later the guest wife went to the next meeting of the club better prepared for the question should someone else ask it. Inevitably someone did, and she replied, "My husband teaches Human Ecology." "That," beamed the questioner in approval, "must be a very important subject."

Unfortunately many professors in other departments have never considered education to be an important subject. Some even think that it isn't a subject at all. Thus, when Nicholas Murray Butler, then a professor of philosophy at Columbia, sought late in the 19th century to organize courses in education there, a group of his colleagues in other departments declared in a written protest: "There is no such subject as Education!"[14] Despite this point of view, departments of education have been established in almost every American university, but in many quarters the opinion prevails that the subject has little significance.

The lowly position of departments of education results in part from the notion that we chiefly spend our time teaching teachers how to teach. As a professor of English at an Eastern college expressed it a few years ago, "The accepted notion of the function of educationists is teaching teachers how to teach." Since professors of education have no more skill as teachers than professors of other subjects, clearly they must

all be charlatans. So runs the argument, but it sprouts from a naive view of the subject-matter of departments of education. I need to discuss that subject-matter before I can explain what a professor of higher education does.

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During the 19th century departments of education unmistakably gave most of their attention to methods of teaching, but this has long ceased to be true. Of the 33 members of the Stanford School of Education Faculty, only 9 carry courses having to do with teaching methodology. Like their 24 colleagues who do not teach such courses, they chiefly give their attention to three other enterprises: first, to studying the behavior of children and adolescents and particularly how they grow and learn; second, to analyzing the operational problems of educational institutions; and third, to appraising the ideas which struggle for dominance in education. Each of these divisions of the subject requires the attention of specialists; and education has become as specialized as, say, chemistry. A chemist is no longer a plain chemist, but, instead, a biochemist, an organic chemist, a physical chemist, etc. So it is, too, in education where we have educational historians, philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, statisticians as well as specialists who concentrate upon school administration, elementary education, secondary education, and now higher education. Questions of teaching methods will always be the major concern of some of us, but dozens of other insistent problems chiefly engage our attention.

For example, the recent avalanche of disapproval of the public schools and of educationists includes little about methods of teaching. Instead these criticisms relate to problems such as: What shall the schools teach? How shall they be organized? Who shall control them? These questions have

emerged, some believe, not from the failure of the schools but from their success. This at least is the opinion of one of the nation's leading philosophers who is not, incidentally, an educationist -- Sidney Hook, Chairman of the Division of Philosophy and Psychology of the Graduate School of New York University. The criticisms of the public schools can be wisely appraised, declares Professor Hook, only when they are laid alongside their achievements. These he has listed as:

1. The American school and educational system has been the prime agency of achieving a unified democratic nation out of diverse ethnic groups of varied national origins.

2. The American educational system has provided an educational ladder on which millions have climbed to a better social life.

3. ... it has remained neutral in the great conflicts of religious faiths.

4. ... [it] has come nearest to achieving a classless school system in the entire history of human society. Morally, this is its most glorious achievement. Educationally, it has created prodigious difficulties and theoretical confusions....[9]

In the last sentence Professor Hook has stated the major function of educationists, namely, attempting to cope with the "prodigious difficulties and theoretical confusions" in education. Most of these result, be it emphasized, from conflicts within American life itself, conflicts which will persist so long as we remain a democratic people. "Education," wrote our own Professor Guerard recently, "is the keystone of our democracy";[6] and hence special-interest groups constantly seek to influence if not to capture it. Educationists will therefore continue to be shot at from many sides. The attacks will cease only when Americans cease cherishing education as, to use the expression of a recent writer in Harper's Magazine, "the matrix" of our society.[5]

The very great majority of educationists concern themselves with ele-

mentary and secondary education; but in 1893 G. Stanley Hall, President of Clark University, initiated a course in higher education which he taught annually until 1910.[15.2] He described it in the Clark University Annual Register as follows:

> Higher Education, including university work, technical education. Training in Law, Medicine, and Theology; Recent Progress, Present State and Prospects of the Most Advanced Education in Different Countries including our own.[3]

In 1910 Hall turned over the course to his associate, Edmund C. Sanford, also a college president, who continued to teach it until the time of his death in 1924. Meanwhile other courses had been established at the University of Chicago and at Johns Hopkins University. The former disappeared early; but the latter, taught by Edward F. Buchner, a philosopher turned educationist, continued until 1929, the year of his death.[15.3]

Courses in higher education at Stanford began in 1928 when Walter Crosby Eells first gave his course entitled "The Junior College." Soon other courses followed having to do with the college and university, administration, curricular problems, student personnel services, and other such topics. About the same time comparable courses were initiated at Columbia, Chicago, Ohio State, Minnesota, and New York University.[15.4] About 20 universities now offer such courses, and some ten of those who teach them concentrate entirely upon higher education. At least five of these latter are former college presidents.

As yet no association of professors of higher education has been organized; and so unfortunately I know little of the activities of my opposite numbers. Of necessity, therefore, I limit myself to outlining the courses I teach and the kinds of research on which my doctoral students and I work.

The first course carries the title "Introduction to American Higher Education." It describes the sprawling, complex, diversified mingle-mangle known as American Higher Education. It opens with an analysis of how and why higher educational institutions differ from the schools and how and why American colleges and universities differ from those of Europe. No European nation has more than 26 universities; but 233 American institutions call themselves universities; and in addition we have about 700 liberal arts colleges, 200 teachers colleges, 500 junior colleges, and a miscellany of unitary professional schools bringing the total to almost 1900 institutions. Approximately 1400 of these grant degrees, but only 850 or 60% are accredited. Accreditation has not been achieved, incidentally, by about 50 of the 233 so-called universities. In fact, the United States Office of Education accounts only 131 of them to be universities, and the Association of American Universities includes only 35 in its membership.

Many people define a university as any institution which grants the Ph.D. and comparable advanced degrees, but 40 of the 152 institutions which confer such degrees do not call themselves universities. These include Cal. Tech., Carnegie Tech., M.I.T., Pennsylvania State College, Michigan State College and three women's colleges -- Bryn Mawr, Radcliffe, and Smith. Some of these confer a large number of doctorates. M.I.T., for instance, each year hoods just about the same number of doctors as Stanford; and Pennsylvania State College last year gave more doctorates than the University of Pennsylvania. Twelve institutions, however, confer more than 50% of the more than 8,300 non-medical doctorates given annually, and 25 institutions confer three-quarters of the total. Stanford ranks 16th among the 25. Last year it awarded about 2% of all doctorates. Columbia, the most prolific, awarded something over 7%.[13]

Europeans respect our top universities, but most of them have a difficult time comprehending what appears to them to be our indiscriminate employment of the name university as well as the existence of our liberal arts colleges and junior colleges which have no counterparts elsewhere. Further, they sneer at the abundance of half-educated if not downright uneducated people upon whom we confer bachelor's, master's, and even doctor's degrees. To them and also to many Americans our higher education seems so chaotic as to be senseless and much of it of such low grade as to be worthy only of contempt. In this introductory course we explore these criticisms and attempt to put them in perspective; we review the history of the higher learning and the higher education from the time of Plato and Aristotle; we canvass the forces in the Western World and in American life which have given us the kinds of colleges and universities we have; we analyze their more urgent problems; and throughout we seek an integrated overview of the American higher educational enterprise and its place in the life of the nation.

During the first years that I taught this course I exuded pessimism about the future of our colleges and universities; but the more I learn about those of other nations, the more optimistic I become about our own. Despite the many problems that plague us, including the conflict between the higher learning and the higher education which I shall be discussing in a few moments, I look to the future with assurance. In this course, therefore, I list and elaborate upon what seem to me to be the points of strength of American colleges and universities. In particular I emphasize the following nine:

1. The integration of the arts and sciences especially in the undergraduate faculty of arts and sciences, the like of which exists in no other country.

2. The coordination of basic and applied research to an extent not yet accomplished in Eu[illegible] and particularly lacking in France.
3. The closeness of our colleges and universities to the American people, a fact which creates many problems but which has contributed vitally to the unity of our country and which has also protected our higher educational institutions from being starved by those who abho[illegible] intellectual snobbishness.
4. The existence of boards of trustees whose members, though often less knowledgeable about higher education than they should be, have with few exceptions sustained and championed academic freedom and, further, have helped to forefend the syndicalistic practices that have kept many universities of other countries relatively aloof from the immediate problems of society.
5. The power of leadership we give to college and university presidents. American higher education has developed as it has chiefly, it seems to me, because during the last four decades of the 19th century a number of fabulous personalities appeared in university presidencies who had the insight to understand and the ability to marshal the forces then maturing in American society.
6. The willingness of our universities to admit subjects which have been scoffed at in the past (agriculture, business administration, engineering, and nursing, for example) but which, maturing in the university environment, have made invaluable contributions to our national life as well as to the universities themselves.
7. The loyalty and generosity of our alumni who include many fewer rah-rah boys than some critics believe and who annually contribute millions of dollars to their alma maters and also nurture them in numerous other ways.

8. The interest and abundant generosity of the public at large whose gifts to our colleges and universities amaze Europeans. They probably had more to do with the ground-breaking activities of American higher education than any other consideration.
9. The constant and fruitful competition between public and private institutions, a fact which has led to increasing the effectiveness of both.

Perhaps some would disagree with the validity of some of these nine suggested points of strength; but everyone must agree, I think, that our colleges and universities have become pivotal institutions in our culture. In any event, for two clear reasons they have strategic importance in American life: first, they train most of the leaders of almost every other institution and, second, they continuously create new knowledge for their use. Colleges and universities are, in fact, mighty powerhouses producing most of the country's highly trained manpower and a large portion of its knowledge power.

Since last Fall this introductory course has been administratively allocated in the Graduate Division, but from its first offering most of the graduate students who have taken it have come from departments other than Education. Students from seven departments are enrolled in it this quarter -- Art, Biology, Business Administration, Chemistry, Education, English, and Romantic Languages. All but a very few have had teaching experience in higher educational institutions, and some are members of the Stanford Faculty. A professor and an associate professor in one of the engineering departments, for example, have taken this and several other courses in the higher education sequence.

These other courses relate to the government, administration, structuring, curriculums, instructional problems, and student personnel services

of colleges and universities. Three younger members of the staff teach five of these courses alternately with me: Dr. Ernest B. O'Byrne, Assistant to the Director of the Hoover Institute and Library; Dr. Isabel M. Schevill, Assistant Professor of Education and Spanish; and Dr. Robert J. Wert, Assistant to the President. Professors Bartky and Kinney also offer courses relating to higher educational institutions — Professor Bartky those having to do with junior colleges and Professor Kinney those having to do with teacher training institutions.

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My own special concerns are the introductory course which I've sketched and one other now called "The Structures of Higher Education" but which ought to be renamed "The Structures, Functions, and Purposes of American Higher Education." Practically everything I do revolves about this axial course. The greater part of my research originates in it, and 14 of the 35 doctoral dissertations completed under my direction in my nine years at Stanford deal with problems turned up in it.*

This focal course has two key words -- diversity and conflict. It documents the diversity of American higher education and identifies the conflicts which abound among the structures, functions, and purposes of colleges and universities. I have already cited the structural diversity that Europeans find so difficult to comprehend, but consider for a moment some of the current structural conflicts.

Robert Maynard Hutchins for 25 years has been advocating the complete

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*When a number of other studies have been completed, I shall be able to finish a book which the Carnegie Corporation commissioned me to write 11 years ago. Some of my colleagues ascribe my delay in publishing the book to "perfectionism"; but I take the position that if the present manuscript doesn't satisfy me, its publication would probably furnish another target for the critics of educationists who welcome opportunities to deplore our "inadequate scholarship."

restructuring of American education from the elementary school through the university, a reorganization which would bisect the traditional liberal arts college by assigning the freshman and sophomore years to secondary schools and the junior and senior years to graduate and professional schools. In the process Mr. Hutchins would convert most of the 700 liberal arts colleges into junior colleges, but a few would continue as three-year structures offering the master's degree.[10] Plans much like this have been strongly pushed for over a century by men of prestige comparable to that of Mr. Hutchins', but the liberal arts colleges have not accepted these invitations to commit suicide. Nor have the universities been willing to drop their freshman and sophomore years. Incidentally, five unsuccessful attempts have been made by two Stanford presidents to slice off these lower division years here, the last effort having been made in 1939.

About this same year Mr. Conant of Harvard became interested in the structural problem, and soon he began promoting his version of reform. He too seems to envision the disappearance of the 700 liberal arts colleges; but instead of agreeing with Mr. Hutchins' proposal to convert the junior colleges into four-year institutions beginning with the junior year of high school, he keeps the junior colleges much as they are except for one crucial difference. Under Mr. Conant's plan, all the bright youngsters capable of becoming what he calls "cultural leaders" would go directly from high school to a university; everyone else would go to junior colleges which, no longer enrolling any potential "cultural leaders," would, to quote him, serve those destined to be:

> Future skilled manual workers, technical workers -- including repairmen of all sorts -- secretaries, accountants, housewives, restaurant keepers, salesmen....[4]

In order to understand why Mr. Conant, Mr. Hutchins, and others propose

such drastic changes, one must move from the problem of the structuring of education to an examination of the functions which educational institutions perform. In contrast with the schools, colleges and universities are infinitely complex structures not only because of the greater size of many of them but chiefly because they perform several functions which the schools do not. Of these additional functions, everyone agrees that research stands first; and many professors and some administrators judge it to be considerably more important than the educational function. To employ the terms in the title of this address, they believe that the higher learning, that is, the function of increasing knowledge, is more insistent if not essential than the higher education, that is, the function of communicating the higher learning to students.

Not a few professors, indeed, give all their enthusiasm to the higher learning and consider teaching, or the higher education, to be a chore to be neglected whenever it interferes with their research. I do not make this statement, I hasten to point out, as an accusation but rather as a report of an observation made by many people, one of whom I quote -- Dr. Waldo G. Leland, director emeritus of the American Council of Learned Societies. Blaming the graduate schools for the conflict between the higher learning and the higher education, Dr. Leland wrote a few years ago:

> It is in the graduate school of arts and sciences that most of our scholars... are formed, and the climate of the graduate school is not conducive to the formation of scholars who will look upon teaching as an inspiring mission. Too often they will regard it as an unfortunate necessity -- a disagreeable means of earning their living in order to devote their real efforts to research.... This is a high price to pay for research, which is too often of mediocre quality and unproductive of significant additions to knowledge.[12]

As a student of colleges and universities I try not to take sides in the conflict between the higher learning and the higher education. For almost 30 years I have been concerned with them both; and I think them equally

important, equally essential, equally vital. But they clash; and it seems to me that the most urgent, the most imperative problems of American higher education converge in the conflict between them. I therefore attempt to study the conflict with all the scholarly detachment of which I am capable.

Both Mr. Hutchins and Mr. Conant have vigorously advocated structural reorganizations because of their belief that their plans will, among other things, ameliorate this most frustrating of all discords in higher education. Regardless of the merits of their plans, however, it seems clear that neither of them will be adopted because neither takes sufficiently into account the third factor, namely, the factor of purposes.

Colleges and universities perform the functions of teaching and research not just for the sake of performing them but, rather, in order to achieve or to further certain purposes. They undertake research because society has an unquenchable appetite for new knowledge, and they are teaching institutions because society wants the knowledge produced by research put to use. The purpose of research, then, is to increase the quantity and quality of the higher learning; the purpose of teaching is to communicate the results of the higher learning to as many members of society as are capable both of acquiring it and of being absorbed into the economy.

These equally valuable purposes and their related functions collide, and we have not succeeded in developing structural plans to end or even greatly to reduce the impact of the collision. This fact makes for a series of other conflicts, only one of which I can briefly discuss, namely, that between the purposes of research-minded professors and the purposes of students. I'm not talking about dull or lazy students but about the ordinary undergraduate and graduate students in the better colleges and universities of the country who for 20 years have been a more serious-minded group

of young men and women than any of the predecessors of earlier periods. The depression of the 'thirties, the war, and the precarious state of the world have given professors, in the words of Henry Seidel Canby, increasing numbers of "hard working, hard thinking" students "able and willing to relate their studies to the actualities of American life."[2.1]

Oppressed by the antagonism between the purposes of professors and of students, Mr. Canby resigned his professorship of English at Yale to become editor of the Saturday Review of Literature. Later he wrote a book about the conflict, and I quote two passages from it. The first reports an extreme example of a kind of research which contributes little if anything to teaching and which -- so Mr. Hutchins, Abraham Flexner, Waldo Leland, and others assert -- can be matched today. This first passage tells of the research of a member of the English Department at Yale during the years of Canby's association with it:

> I knew a so-called fabulist in my days in the graduate school, who for years had compared manuscript with manuscript of the fables of Aesop, tracing their indebtedness one to another by the use of "wolf" for "fox" or a peculiarity in the ass that wore the lion's skin, until he had curves of dates and influences running clear across the European Middle Ages.... It meant no more than counting the bricks in a hundred city blocks. Yet he was a happy man. His task extended onward indefinitely. He would never finish, and so need never draw conclusions. He had a puzzle so good that it got him a professorship. The case was extreme but illuminating.[2.2]

The second passage reads:

> The faculty [freed from the limitations of the fixed curriculum] had one of the great opportunities of educational history, and muffed it.... They taught physics for physicists, biology for biologists, history for historians. They were not interested in the American youth who was not going to be a specialist, a professor, but only a leader of industrial, commercial, political America.[2.3]

A number of universities -- Columbia, Chicago, and Harvard in particular -- have been busy for some years attempting to mediate the conflict between students interested in being broadly educated and professors inter-

ested primarily in research. Their successes have had much to do with my becoming optimistic about the future of American higher education; but they have a long, long way to go; and most other institutions haven't even started. The situation improves over the country all too slowly, and the pace of change will probably continue to be languid until we find answers to scores of problems. I have chosen as the focus of my teaching this course in the structures, functions, and purposes of colleges and universities because it identifies these problems; and I concentrate my research upon the investigation of as many of them as available time and funds permit.

The establishment of the David Jacks Professorship sharpens markedly the opportunity to pursue these studies. It also brings hope of the enhanced interest and support without which the professorship cannot be substantially productive. I know of no exception to the generalization that only those subjects become soundly established which have been adequately supplied with funds for fellowships, research, and publication. If departments of education have been less scholarly than some believe they should be, perhaps the paucity of funds for scholarly investigations may be one of the reasons.

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Four hundred years ago it looked for a while as if the two universities of England would be destroyed along with the monasteries. That much maligned monarch, Henry the Eighth, however, ruled emphatically against his courtiers who proposed such action. "I perceive," he said, "the Abbey lands have fleshed you, and set your teeth on edge that you ask also those colleges.... I tell you, sirs, that I judge no land in England better bestowed than that which is given to our universities. For by their maintenance our realm shall be well governed when we are dead...."[7]

The American colleges and universities of today mesh more thoroughly and more creatively with the life of our country than did Oxford and Cambridge with the life of England in the days of Henry the Eighth. Because of their increasing importance, they deserve to be studied as continuously and as carefully as any other institutions in our culture. The generosity of Miss Lee L. Jacks in making possible the establishment of two professorships will help immeasurably to further such study.

The David Jacks Professorship is the first endowed chair of higher education in the United States and, indeed, in the world. During his life David Jacks quietly but incalculably contributed to the progress of California and its institutions, and the inauguration of a professorship in his name will perpetuate his influence through the centuries. Mindful of the distinction and responsibility of the professorship, I shall throughout my tenure as its first incumbent strive to honor the memory of the farseeing, resolute, and generous man whose name it bears.

April 30, 1954

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